

FINLAND

Biodiversity's restoration, preservation & enhancement

Location

Town of Li

Programming period

2014 – 2020

Priority

P4 – Ecosystems
management

Measure

M01 - Knowledge transfer &
information actions

Funding (EUR)

Total budget 582 532.00
RDP contribution 553 406.00
Private 29 126.00

Project duration

2019 – 2021

Project promoter

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Website

www.ilmastoareena.fi

The IlmastoAreena is a unique platform aiming to bring together all stakeholders, including rural citizens, in the discussions for solutions to climate change.

Summary

The discussion on climate change has been mainly initiated and led by cities. In contrast, rural areas are often asked to implement climate change mitigating actions that have been decided elsewhere. The IlmastoAreena project aims to change this situation by making rural areas an active participant in the discussions on climate change.



The IlmastoAreena is a platform that helps actors in the countryside – from farmers to entrepreneurs, youth to energy companies – to get actively involved as equal partners in the discussions on climate change and contribute in the co-creation of solutions. As a platform the project represents the rural areas in the discussions that take place across the country throughout the year, it initiates discussions itself and organises an annual two-day festival on climate change in the town of li, Finland.

Results

Rural areas have become an active and equal partner in the co-creation of solutions to tackle climate change.

The IlmastoAreena is projecting the success of the town of li, Finland to all rural areas and as such, it demonstrates that important challenges can be addressed by rural areas.

Around 45 events will be organised through-out the whole project period.

There is a strong demand to internationalise the IlmastoAreena and the project holders are planning for this next stage of the project.

Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ One of the core values of the project is to bring together all stakeholders. If a stakeholder is not involved in the planning and decision-making process for climate change solutions, the solutions will need to be reviewed in the short term. Alternatively, if all stakeholders are actively participating, solutions will be widely accepted.

Context

The discussion on climate change has been mainly initiated and led by cities. In contrast, rural areas are often asked to implement climate change mitigating actions that have been decided elsewhere. The IlmastoAreena project aims to change this situation by making rural areas an active participant in the discussions on climate change. Local solutions to global challenges can be found in rural areas, as well as everywhere else.

Objectives

The project aims to bring forward the perspective of rural areas on how to tackle climate change. It aims to enable rural citizens to participate in the discussions as equals and in this way, help develop a common understanding and joint solutions for climate change.

Activities

The project's main activity is to create a platform for democratic and inclusive discussion on climate change.

The platform works on two levels: firstly, by joining in all year-round discussions on climate change as a representative of rural areas, and secondly by organising a two-day climate festival in the town of Ii. This iteration will be repeated three times during the project.

All year round, IlmastoAreena takes part in the climate discussions and makes sure that the voice of rural areas is heard. In essence, it acts as a representative of rural areas in the different panels and discussion forums that take place throughout the year. IlmastoAreena initiates discussions as well and empowers groups whose voices are not heard so often. As an example, the project organised a discussion on climate change between three children of the town of Ii with the former president of Finland. The videoclips of these discussions will be used to stimulate discussions in the different media. The project participates in discussions organised both by the project, and by other forums. During the project period, IlmastoAreena will publish around 250 opinions, texts, or posts in traditional and social media.

The first IlmastoAreena-festival was held in August 2019 and attracted 6 500 visitors to the rural town of Ii. In the two days of the festival, more than 100 speakers and performers stepped on the two stages of the festival grounds, including leaders of all the political parties sitting in their parliament, Finland's most followed Youtube influencer and the children of the local school. More than 50 companies, NGOs and organisations presented their climate change related solutions.

Additional sources of information

www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/w3ct03ms

www.greenpolis.fi

www.bbc.com/news/av/world-europe-48060788/finland-s-new-generation-of-climate-heroes

During the festival, climate change is viewed through all facets of life, such as arts, entertainment, research, policy and most importantly, from the citizens' perspective.

Stakeholders and networks

Bringing together a vast number of stakeholders is crucial to meet the objectives of the project. IlmastoAreena is a platform where all voices are heard and it is also a place where it is important to talk based on facts, not just expressing opinions.

In addition to the regular steering committee, the project has a board of directors consisting of high-profile members, including the ministries of Agriculture and Environment, the Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners (MTK), the Finnish Environment Institute, Sitra, Greenpeace and the Climate Leadership Coalition (CLC).

At local level, the project works closely with NGOs, schools, municipalities, cultural organisations and most importantly with citizens.

Main results

Rural areas have become an active and equal partner in the co-creation of solutions to tackle climate change. The national discussions on climate change are no longer taking place away from rural areas. The town of Ii has for several years been the number one emission cutter in Finland and as such, it became the natural location for the nationwide climate festival. By the end of the funding, it is envisaged that the platform will have established itself as the most important and prominent platform for debate on climate change in Finland.

The IlmastoAreena is projecting the success of the town of Ii to all rural areas and as such, it demonstrates that important challenges can be tackled by rural areas. Cities can also learn from rural areas.

Around 45 events will be organised through-out the whole project period.

There is a strong demand to internationalise the IlmastoAreena and the project holders are planning for this next stage of the project.

Key lessons

A core value of the project is bringing everyone together. Only by co-creation it is possible to tackle climate change. This is important for sustainability. If a stakeholder is not involved in the planning and decision-making process, the solution will need to be reviewed in the short term. Alternatively, if all stakeholders are actively participating, the solutions will be widely accepted.